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ABSTRACT

Native educators from around Alaska contributed to the development of guidelines for cross-cultural orientation programs for educators. The guidelines are organized around various roles related to culturally responsive schooling in Alaska. They encourage schools to strive to be reflections of their communities by incorporating and building upon the cultural traditions and knowledge of peoples indigenous to the area. Achieving such a goal requires that all participants acquire a deep understanding of the role of heritage culture in the educational process; to that end, these guidelines have been assembled. Each section of the guidelines is addressed to a particular education role group, briefly describes the group's responsibilities toward cross-cultural understanding, then lists specific actions for the group. The sections address (1) communities, tribes, and Native organizations; (2) school districts and administrators; (3) principals and teachers; (4) schools and school staff; (5) state policy makers and state education agencies; (6) tribal colleges and universities; and (7) sponsors of cultural immersion camps. Eight general recommendations are offered to support implementation of the guidelines. A resource section lists 15 web sites and 13 books and articles. (SV)

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Alaska Native Knowledge Network

Guidelines for

Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs

adopted by

Assembly of
Alaska Native
Educators
Anchorage, Alaska
February 3, 2003

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Southcentral Native Educator's Association

Alaska Native Education Council

Alaska First Nations Research Network

Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education

Ilisagvik College

Interior Athabascan Tribal College

Southeast Alaska Tribal College

Kuspuk Native Educators Association

Preface

The following guidelines address the need for cross-cultural orientation programs to better prepare educators who are able to work across cultural boundaries to provide a culturally responsive and supportive educational environment for all the students in their care. The guidelines are organized around various roles related to culturally responsive schooling in Alaska. Special attention is given to the educational implications for the integration of traditional values and ways of knowing in schools throughout Alaska, recognizing that they are value- and identity-creating institutions. The guidance offered is intended to encourage schools to strive to be reflections of their communities by incorporating and building upon the rich cultural traditions and knowledge of the people indigenous to the area. For such a goal to be achieved it is essential that all participants acquire a deep understanding of the role of heritage culture in the educational process, and it is to that end that these guidelines have been assembled.

Native educators from throughout the state contributed to the development of these guidelines through a series of workshops and meetings associated with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. Representatives of the Native educator organizations listed on the cover participated in the meetings and ratified the final document. The purpose of these guidelines is to offer assistance to educational personnel and others who are seeking to incorporate the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools, along with all the associated guidelines, to promote greater cultural understanding and increase student academic performance. Using these guidelines will expand the knowledge base and range of insights and expertise available to help communities nurture healthy, confident, responsible and well-rounded young adults through a more culturally responsive educational system.

Throughout this document Elders are accorded a central role as the primary source of cultural knowledge. It should be understood that the identification of "Elders" as culture-bearers is not simply a matter of chronological age, but a function of the respect accorded to individuals in each community

who exemplify the values and life-ways of the local culture and who possess the wisdom and willingness to pass their knowledge on to future generations. Respected Elders serve as the philosophers, professors and visionaries of a cultural community, and as such, they are the beacons and calming agents that guide the people who look up to them. In addition, many aspects of cultural knowledge can be learned from other members of a community who have not yet been recognized as Elders, but continue to engage in subsistence (traditional harvest) activities and seek to practice and teach local life-ways.

Along with these guidelines are a set of general recommendations aimed at stipulating the kind of initiatives needed to achieve the goals for which the guidelines are intended. State and federal agencies, universities, professional associations, school districts and Native communities are expected to review their policies, programs and practices and adopt these guidelines and recommendations to strengthen their cultural responsiveness. In so doing, the educational development of students throughout Alaska will be enriched and the future well-being of the communities in which they live will be enhanced. Many of the guidelines included here are not limited in applicability to persons working in schools, but can easily be extended to prepare personnel in other fields of endeavor to better understand the cultural dynamics associated with their work.

Support for implementation of these guidelines can be obtained from the regional Native educator associations, the member Tribal Colleges of the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education and the staff of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. Further information on issues related to the implementation of these guidelines, go to http://www.ankn.uaf.edu.

Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Communities, Tribes and Native Organizations

Culturally responsive communities, tribes and Native organizations provide a supportive environment to assist new members in learning about local cultural practices and traditions.

Communities will increase cross-cultural understanding through the following actions:

a. Establish a welcoming and supportive environment for new personnel moving to the community and offer guidance in helping them learn the cultural ways of the area, including greeting them at the airport and assisting them in getting settled into the community.
b. Assist school boards, local school committees, Elders, Native educator associations and any other local or regional organizations to initiate programs that promote greater cross-cultural understanding for personnel new to the area.
c. Use the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools and the Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally Healthy Youth to guide cross-cultural orientation initiatives and to promote substantial dialogue between school and community on behalf of the cultural and educational well-being of the students.
d. Sponsor a guided cultural immersion opportunity for new personnel, including a minimum of a week-long participation in a traditional camp environment or other site of long-standing cultural significance.
e. Implement an adopt-a-teacher program linking new staff to a family, Native teachers and Elders in the community and include them in community activities and events. Promote healthy community activities and a supportive environment for all participants.
f. Sponsor regular meetings and inservice programs with parents, grandparents and teachers in the community to develop ways to incorporate cultural values and ways of knowing in the educational programs/practices.
g. Assist teachers with the involvement of Elders as the local culture bearers to foster the incorporation of traditional knowledge, values and beliefs in all aspects of community and school

life.

h. Develop a comprehensive tribal/district education policy that addresses the role of language, culture and community in the education of local youth, and implement the policy through strong partnership arrangements between the schools and communities. This will provide teachers with clear guidance regarding the expectations of the community.
i. Provide an annual open house/workshop (with food) for parents, extended family members and teachers on how the school can help the students be successful in ways that are compatible with the aspirations that parents and communities have for their children.
j. Develop mechanisms to coordinate services of all local and regional social service, health, economic, cultural and educational programs for mutual support and benefit to the communities.
k. Provide encouragement and support for community members (students, aides, teachers) who show an interest in pursuing a career in education and involve them as resources in cross-cultural orientation initiatives.
l. Encourage all members of the community to take an active role in guiding newcomers to understand local cultural practices and aspirations and to become active contributors to community life.
m. Implement a support structure for preparing the next generation of Elders.
n. Provide opportunities for community members to actively participate in the review of local educational programs.
o. Seek funding from local, district, state, federal and private sources to provide support as needed for the initiatives outlined above.

Guidelines for Culturally Responsive School Districts and Administrators

Culturally responsive school districts and administrators provide support for cross-cultural orientation programs for district staff and for integrating cultural considerations in all aspects of the educational system.

School districts and administrators will increase cross-cultural understanding through the following actions:

a. Provide new candidates for positions with ample and accurate information regarding the living and working environment in which they will be situated, including costs, quality of housing, sources of food and factual background information on the school and community. Wherever possible, provide opportunities for candidates to visit and meet people from the community in which they will be situated before final commitments are made.
b. Recruit and employ local staff who are knowledgeable about the cultural heritage and language traditions of the surrounding area and have a life-long commitment to the region. Provide ample professional development opportunities for such personnel to continue to expand their capacity to provide leadership and support in the schools and district. Encourage new teachers to learn from those who are well grounded in the local community and culture.
c. Provide support for local sponsorship of regular cultural orientation programs for new staff, including participation in a cultural immersion camp (minimum of one week) in collaboration with local community organizations. Board members and administrators should participate in the camps along with other district staff.
d. Involve local administrators in planning community/cultural orientation programs and participate in other staff and curriculum development activities.
e. Incorporate a cultural orientation program in the school district inservice plan and provide contractual and financial support for its implementation (supplemental funding is available through the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development).
f. Integrate a cultural orientation component into a year-long induction program for new personnel

involving guided cultural immersion opportunities, audio-conferences, weekend seminars and course credit that fulfills the state multicultural education and Alaska studies requirements for certification.

g. Respect what the Elders and parents have to offer by including them as significant advisors and contributors to the educational system, including the district office.
h. Facilitate broad-based parent and community involvement in all aspects of education in the school district, including planning, policy-making and educational practice.
i. Develop evaluation criteria for school personnel that reflect the range of teaching practices that are necessary to meet student needs in culturally diverse situations, including those of teachers who utilize Native ways of knowing.
j. Use the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools for guidance in all matters related to educational policy and practice in the school district. Implement a regular review process to determine the extent to which the Cultural Standards are used in the district and school programs.

Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Principals and Teachers

Culturally responsive educators are responsible for providing a supportive learning environment that reinforces the educational well-being of the students in their care in a manner consistent with local cultural beliefs, practices and aspirations.

Educators (teachers, principals, aides, counselors, etc.) will gain and contribute to cross-cultural understanding through the following actions:

a. Participate in a comprehensive cross-cultural orientation program that provides insights into local cultural beliefs, practices and aspirations as they relate to the education of the students in your care.
b. Take up residency in a new community as early as possible (well before school starts) and participate in on-going community activities so that people get to know you as a person before you take on the role of teacher. Be respectful of local ways and seek guidance in all aspects of your involvement in the life of the community. Get acquainted with your new community through first-hand experience rather than through books, and be careful about over-generalization of insights gained from prior readings.
c. Participate in community events and activities throughout the year, including local tribal and municipal government meetings, to acquire the insights and relationships needed to develop appropriate motivation and discipline practices in the school.
d. Use curricular and instructional strategies that make effective use of the cultural and natural world in which the students are situated to enrich and give meaning to what is being taught. Align all subject matter with the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools and develop curriculum models that are based on the local cultural and environmental experiences of the students.
e. Utilize local expertise, including Elders who speak the heritage language, parents, teacher aides, cooks, janitors and student assistants, as co-teachers in the classroom. Provide support in the curriculum for students to participate in subsistence (traditional harvest) activities with community members as a part of the school program.
f. Recognize and validate all aspects of the knowledge students bring with them and assist them in their on-going quest for personal and cultural affirmation. Use multiple indicators, including culturally relevant assessments, to measure student achievement.
g. Observe, listen and participate as local events take place to acquire an in-depth understanding of the knowledge system indigenous to the community and apply that understanding in teaching practice.
h. When evaluating teaching personnel, make allowances for the range of teaching practices that are

necessary to meet student needs and learning styles in culturally diverse situations, including those reflected by teachers utilizing Native ways of knowing. Encourage new teachers to learn from those who are well grounded in the local community and culture.

i. Use local protocol to visit the student's homes and learn about the family's aspirations for their children as well as their expectations for you. Provide a supportive environment for family participation in all aspects of their children's education, including that which takes place during subsistence activities. Adjust the school schedule to accommodate local cultural activities and events.
j. Review all curriculum resource materials annually with local experts to insure cultural accuracy and appropriateness, and assist students in making similar critical judgments themselves.
k. Utilize the Alaska Native Knowledge Network and the regional Native educator associations to identify locally relevant curriculum materials with which students can readily identify, including materials prepared by Alaska Native authors.
l. Implement a mentorship program for all new school/district personnel.
m. Incorporate expertise from the community in educational planning by including all staff (teachers, aides, cooks, janitors, etc.) in school meetings.

Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Schools

Schools must be fully engaged with the life of the communities they serve and provide ample encouragement, support and resources for all staff to integrate the local cultural and physical environment in their work.

Schools will contribute to greater cross-cultural understanding through the following actions:

a. Provide an in-depth cultural orientation and year-long induction program for all new teachers and administrators in collaboration with the local community and Native organizations, including the opportunity to spend a week in a cultural immersion camp.
b. Establish an easily accessible repository of cultural resource materials and a reliable process for the daily involvement of knowledgeable expertise from the community, including respected Elders.
c. Provide curricula that take into account the cultural variability of the social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of each child and community, especially during the critical period of identity formation that takes place during the adolescent years.
d. Utilize the natural environment of the community to move educational activities beyond the classroom as a way of fostering culturally responsive, place-based education and deepening the learning experiences of students.
e. Support the implementation of an Elders-in-Residence program in the school and classroom and teach respect for Elders at all times. Use the Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge to assist in incorporating Elders into the school setting in ways that are natural and beneficial for all concerned.
f. Incorporate the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools in all aspects of the school curriculum, while demonstrating their applicability in providing multiple avenues to meet the State Content Standards.
g. Support school staff in activities celebrating the local culture, heritage and environment (e.g., photo gallery of Elders in school hallway, local art/craft work displays, traditional demonstrations and historical displays, Elders birthday celebrations, or culturally appropriate bulletin board displays).
h. Utilize Elders and Native teachers from the local community to acquire a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the local, regional and statewide context in which the students live, particularly as it relates to the well-being and survival of the local culture.
i. Provide community access to and use of school facilities for cultural events and educational activities. The school should be viewed as an extension of the community, for use at the local

school/community committees discretion.

Guidelines for State Policy Makers and Educational Agencies

State policy-makers and educational agencies should provide a supportive policy, program and funding environment that promotes the establishment of cross-cultural orientation opportunities for all personnel associated with schools.

State policy-makers and educational agencies will contribute to greater cross-cultural understanding through the following actions:

a. Provide incentives and resources for local communities and school districts to implement cultural orientation programs that prepare teachers to effectively integrate traditional knowledge, ways of knowing and world views into the educational systems in culturally appropriate ways.
b. Recognize that the responsibility for design and implementation of a cultural orientation program must be in the hands of representatives of the respective culture(s).
c. Require school districts to include cross-cultural orientation programs in the annual inservice plan submitted to EED for staff development.
d. Provide a professional development plan for educators to obtain a "cross-cultural specialist" endorsement on their certificate, based on the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools and the Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers.
e. Incorporate the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools into the Alaska school accreditation system as an essential component to be addressed in the self-study and site review.
f. Incorporate the Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers into the review process for the accreditation of teacher education programs in Alaska.
g. Insure that the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools are addressed as a component in all courses approved to fulfill the state multicultural education requirement.
h. Provide incentives and resources for districts to implement policies and practices that promote the preparation of more Native teachers and administrators, who can also serve as the cadre for local cultural orientation programs.

Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Tribal Colleges and Universities

Tribal Colleges and universities are responsible for partnering with communities and schools to provide every educator with the cultural understandings and educational strategies necessary to nurture all youth to their full intellectual and cultural potential.

Tribal Colleges and universities (including the Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education) will contribute to greater cross-cultural understanding through the following actions:

a. Incorporate the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools and the Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers into all teacher preparation programs.
b. Work effectively with communities and schools to provide appropriate cross-cultural orientation opportunities (including cultural immersion camps) for the 75% of Alaska teachers who have received their pre-service preparation elsewhere.

c. Assist school districts in implementing year-long "induction programs" for first-year teachers, including completion of state multicultural education and Alaska studies requirements for certification.
d. Work with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to make available a "cross-cultural specialist" endorsement that can be added to the state teaching and administration certificates for positions requiring specialized cultural expertise.
e. In collaboration with school districts, provide on-going professional development for educators through distance education programs, including opportunities to complete relevant graduate degrees addressing cross-cultural considerations in education.
f. Insure that all college faculty (especially those working with pre-service and inservice teachers) regularly participate in a cultural orientation program, have themselves acquired in-depth experience in a cross-cultural setting and demonstrate cross-cultural understanding in their own teaching behavior.
g. Recruit and employ Native faculty who bring cross-cultural expertise and community perspectives to the preparation of culturally responsive educators. Provide ample professional development opportunities for such faculty to continue to expand their capacity to provide leadership and support in the college. Encourage new faculty to learn from those who are well grounded in the local community and culture.
h. Provide opportunities for Tribal Colleges to teach the local culture and language to teachers as a component of the "cross-cultural specialist" endorsement.
i. Provide ready access to the cultural resources and expertise necessary to fully implement the guidelines outlined above.

Guidelines for Cultural Immersion Camp Sponsors

Cultural immersion camps should provide an authentic and supportive environment in which participants gain first-hand experience interacting with local people while learning the cultural traditions and life-ways of the area.

Cultural immersion camps will increase cross-cultural understanding through the following actions:

a. Select a site for a cultural immersion camp that has cultural significance to people in the area (e.g., fish camp, old village site, historical meeting place, traditional hunting grounds). Include health and safety as primary considerations when making preparations, especially with regard to transportation, food, shelter and tools. Arrange for appropriate insurance coverage.
b. Involve indigenous Elders as the resident authorities in all aspects of camp life and teachings. Camp participants should serve and care for the Elders in accordance with local practices for showing respect and honoring their contributions.
c. Schedule the camp for 5-10 days at a time and place where everyone can participate in seasonal subsistence (traditional harvest) activities and assist in the daily chores associated with traditional camp life. Emphasize relationships and processes for interaction as the primary focus of the camp.
d. Utilize traditional ways of knowing and learning throughout the camp, including observation, demonstration, active participation and listening (e.g., story-telling). Camp activities should flow as naturally as possible in accordance with the surrounding environment. Include traditional food when available and incorporate local protocols and practices for its use.
e. Provide ample time for reflection and follow-up support to help camp participants translate and integrate what they have learned into their work, including appropriate curriculum resources (available on the ANKN and alaskool.org web sites).
f. Implement an adopt-a-teacher program linking camp participants to a family and Elders in the community to provide on-going support and guidance regarding local resources and life-ways.
g. Integrate camps into the school curriculum year-around on a seasonal basis whereby teachers and

students can participate in traditional subsistence activities and gather information that can be used to enliven learning in all subjects throughout the school year.

h. Foster the incorporation of traditional knowledge, values and beliefs in all aspects of community and school life and assist teachers with the involvement of Elders as the local culture bearers.
i. Use the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools and the Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally Healthy Youth to guide cross-cultural orientation initiatives and to promote a substantive dialogue between school and community.

General Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to support the effective implementation of the above guidelines for cross-cultural orientation programs.

1. Regional Native Educator Associations, school districts and related organizations should pursue funding to cooperatively implement an appropriate cultural orientation program to serve the needs in their respective region, including a cultural immersion camp and follow-up activities during the school year.
2. The Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education should encourage its member institutions to develop an academic support structure for cross-cultural orientation programs in each region, including provisions for academic credit and a system for assessment of cross-cultural expertise.
3. The First Alaskans Institute, in collaboration with CANHE, should sponsor a training program for personnel associated with planning and implementing cross-cultural orientation programs.
4. Local communities and tribal organizations should sponsor local and regional cultural orientation programs as needed to prepare all outside personnel to work effectively with people in ways that are compatible with local cultural ways and respectful of the local heritage.
5. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development should provide incentives and secure continued funding for school districts to incorporate cultural orientation programs into the annual district inservice schedule.
6. School districts should sponsor opportunities for students and teachers to participate regularly in cultural immersion camps with parents, Elders and teachers sharing subsistence activities during each season of the year (similar to the Alakanuk camp model described on the ANKN web site).
7. The guidelines outlined above should be made an integral part of all professional preparation and cross-cultural orientation programs for educators in Alaska.
8. An annotated bibliography of resource materials that address issues associated with these guidelines will be maintained on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network web site (www.ankn.uaf.edu).

Resources for Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs

Websites

Alaska Native Knowledge Network
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu

"Sharing Our Pathways" Newsletter
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/sop/

Alaska Native Curriculum and Teacher Development Project
http://www.alaskool.org

Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/standards.html

Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally Healthy Youth
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/youth.html

Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/knowledge.html

Alaska Federation of Natives Research Guidelines
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/afnguide.html

Cultural Heritage and Education Institute (Minto)
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/chei/

Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights, ANKN
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/rights.html

Alaska Federation of Natives
http://www.nativefederation.org/flash.html

First Alaskans Institute
http://www.firstalaskans.org/

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
http://www.eed.state.ak.us/home.html

Principles & Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/protect.html

The Mataatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/mataatua.html

Coolongatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education
http://www.wipcehawaii.org/coolongatta.htm

Books/Articles/Videos

Alaska Natives Commission (1994). Alaska Natives Commission Final Report. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Federation of Natives (http://www.alaskool.org).

Association of Interior Native Educators (1998). Ten Thousand Years of Learning (Video). Fairbanks, AK: Doyon Foundation (http://www.uaf.edu/aine/).

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Battiste, M. and J. Y. Henderson (2000). Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge. Saskatoon, Purich Publishing Ltd.

Ellerby, J. H. (2001). Working with Aboriginal Elders: An Introductory Handbook for Institution-Based and Health Care Professionals Based on the Teachings of Aboriginal Elders and Cultural Teachers. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Native Studies Press, University of Manitoba.

Hill, Frank, A.O. Kawagley and R. Barnhardt (2000). Cultural Standards and Test Scores. In Sharing Our Pathways, Vol. 5, Issue 4 (http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/sop/).

Kushman, Jim and R. Barnhardt (2001). "Reforming Education From the Inside-Out in Rural Alaska: A Study of Community Engagement and Systemic Reform". Journal of Research in Rural Education, Vol. 17, No. 1 (http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/reform/).

Madison, Curt (1996). Old Minto Cultural Camp (Video). Fairbanks: Alaska Native Knowledge Network (http://www.ankn.uaf.edu).

Martz, Mike (1999). To Show What We Know (Video). Fairbanks: Alaska Native Knowledge Network (http://www.ankn.uaf.edu).

McDowell Group (2001). Alaska Native Education Study: A Statewide Survey of Alaska Native Values and Opinions Regarding Education in Alaska. Anchorage, AK: First Alaskans Institute (http://www.alaskool.org).

Smith, L. T. (1999). Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. New York: Zed Books.

Information on obtaining these resources can be found on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network web site at www.ankn.uaf.edu. Additional resources will be posted as they become available. Please forward submissions to ANKN at fyankn@uaf.edu.

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